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ABSTRACT

This evaluation report of special education in the State of Delaware consists of three parts: (1) a position paper that summarizes the conceptual and philosophical basis for the evaluation system; (2) a profile of first year evaluation findings; and (3) a draft of the Long Range Implementation Plan. The evaluation model considers process, resources, and program indicators. The position paper explains the 10 assumptions underlying the model. The profile section evaluates four areas: (1) development of academic, vocational, and behavioral skills; (2) effective transition from school to the adult community; (3) the quality of post-school life; and (4) satisfaction of the stakeholders with the programs and services. The profile first presents demographic data, then reports results (with graphs and tables as well as narrative) of evaluation of each of the four areas. The long range plan addresses six components of the evaluation system and identifies proposed activities. The components are: consensus building on effectiveness; development and maintenance of the "pulse-taking" system; the process for data-based decision making; in-depth studies of special issues; self-evaluations by the Exceptional Children/Special Programs division; and self-evaluations by local education associations. (DB)

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SPECIAL EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (SEEDS)

1989 - 1990 REPORT

FEBRUARY, 1991

Delaware Department of Public Instruction
Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division

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SPECIAL EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (SEEDS)

1989 - 1990 REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The First Annual Special Education Effectiveness Development System (SEEDS) consists of three parts. The first is a Position Paper that summarizes the conceptual and philosophical basis for SEEDS. The second component is the Profile and the third is a draft of the Long Range Implementation Plan for SEEDS. The purpose of SEEDS is to determine and report the extent to which educational programs and services for exceptional children in Delaware are effective in order to help the Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division (EC/SP) focus its program improvement efforts and resources. The overall SEEDS model is based on ten assumptions, and considers process, resources and program indicators.

The Profile is designed as a reporting mechanism to share with the Department and other stakeholder groups the outcomes of SEEDS on an annual basis. Four areas were identified as being valued outcomes by the stakeholders. If special education programs are effective:

1. Children demonstrate progress in the development of academic, vocational and behavioral skills.
2. Youth are ready to enter the adult community as productive members of society.
3. Youth have a high quality of life as young adults in the community.
4. The stakeholders are generally satisfied with the programs and services provided.

This document represents the conclusion of the first phase of the implementation of SEEDS. Based on the comments and feedback received from stakeholder groups as this document is shared, the Long Range Implementation Plan will be finalized and we will move forward toward the development of the full system.

After you have reviewed all three parts of the document, please take time to complete and return the comment sheet at the end of the Long Range Plan. Thank you.

Additional copies of this document may be obtained by writing:

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Acknowledgements

Many people have been responsible for the development of Special Education Effectiveness Development System (SEEDS). Specifically, the following individuals and groups should be recognized for their contributions:

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Mr. Vaughn K. Lauer
Dr. William Lybarger
Dr. Cherritta Matthews
Ms. Dee Patterson
Dr. George Smith
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Dr. Kenneth R. Olsen, Consultant
Mid-South Regional Resource Center
for his leadership in facilitating the process that has led to SEEDS.

Dr. Robert Bigelow, Consultant
Institutional Research Associates, Inc.
for his knowledge and expertise with the data bases and his patience in doing runs over and over again!

Delaware Special Education Supervisors and Directors for their input and feedback along the way.

A special thanks to the participants of the 1990 EC/SP Summer Institute who reviewed in detail the draft profile and provided feedback essential to the current document.

Martha Brooks, Ed.D.
State Supervisor, EC/SP
Department of Public Instruction

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SPECIAL EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN DELAWARE

A Position Paper

By the staff of the
Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division
Delaware Department of Public Instruction

With the Assistance of Dr. Kenneth R. Olsen
Mid-South Regional Resource Center
January, 1991

For several years the Division of Exceptional Children/Special Programs (EC/SP) of the Delaware Department of Public Instruction (DPI) has been developing the Special Education Effectiveness Development System (SEEDS). In 1987 an initial statement of philosophy and a framework were established through the work of SEEDS Steering and Advisory Committees. This Position Paper updates that earlier work and presents additional concepts that serve as a basis for the continuing development of SEEDS.

CONCEPTUAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS

Purpose:

> The purpose of SEEDS is to determine and report the extent to which educational programs and services for exceptional children in Delaware are effective in order to help EC/SP focus its program improvement efforts and resources.

There are at least three concepts implicit in this purpose statement. The first is that EC/SP views program quality assessment as a critical component of its mission - to ensure effective education for all students in Delaware who have exceptionalities. Second, the primary audience for SEEDS data is EC/SP itself. EC/SP intends to use the information as a basis for decisions about improving EC/SP functions. Finally, SEEDS requires that reporting be an open process that makes information available to all stakeholders. The focus of such reporting will be on the "state of the State" and not on individual LEAs.

Assumptions:

SEEDS development will be based on the following assumptions:

1. Effective programs and services are those that achieve outcomes valued by the people of Delaware, use practices that relate directly to those outcomes, and provide the resources necessary to implement the practices, while protecting individual and group rights.

2. Compliance monitoring (via the Comprehensive Compliance Monitoring System, Local Operational Plan approval, etc.) is a separate but related system that is intended to protect individual and group rights. Therefore, SEEDS should go beyond compliance issues.

3. EC/SP is effective when LEAs are effective; LEAs are effective when schools are effective; and schools are effective when instructional staff are effective.

4. EC/SP must incorporate six functions or subsystems into SEEDS:

    4.1 Building consensus on a vision of effectiveness, especially the core outcomes that are valued by the people of Delaware, including students, parents, education professionals, employees and elected officials;
    4.2 Creating and maintaining ongoing data systems for effectiveness "pulse-taking";
    4.3 Maintaining a philosophy and process for data-based decision-making;
    4.4 Conducting studies of special issues;
    4.5 Conducting EC/SP self-evaluations; and
    4.6 Encouraging and supporting LEA self-evaluations.

5. System development must start with consensus building and pulse-taking on <u>outcomes</u> and then move logically back through <u>practices</u> and <u>resources</u> at each level.

6. EC/SP must take a leadership role by initially clarifying the outcomes valued by staff and presenting available data in order to assist the people of Delaware in consensus building.

7. The initial valued outcomes about which EC/SP should build consensus are as follows:

   a. Students with exceptionalities will receive their education with peers who are not disabled.

   b. Students with exceptionalities will develop academic, communication, social/behavioral and vocational skills appropriate to their needs.

   c. Students with exceptionalities will complete a full program of studies leading to a high school diploma or a certificate of performance.

   d. Students with exceptionalities will move to desired post-school environments, including continuing education or employment, and will exhibit independence in so doing.

   e. Parents, educators, students and the general public will support and exhibit confidence and pride in educational programs for exceptional children.

8. EC/SP decision-making based on SEEDS should lead to one or more of the following activities that will increase LEA capacity for effectiveness:

   a. Policy and procedure development or revision and dissemination;
   b. Guideline development and dissemination;
   c. State-wide training and technical assistance;
   d. Model program and service development/funding;
   e. Public awareness efforts;
   f. Working with institutions of higher education to change personnel preparation;
   g. Working out cooperative relationships with other agencies responsible for persons with handicaps; or
   h. Additional in-depth studies to look at specific outcomes, practices or resources.

9. SEEDS must be a dynamic system, responsive to changes in societal values, technological changes and changes in State needs and EC/SP roles.

10. Responsiveness to changes can be improved through the continuing use of a Steering Committee of stakeholders to

help guide SEEDS development, e.g., including other DPI personnel, LEA administrators and staff, and the State Advisory Committee.

CLARIFICATION OF ASSUMPTIONS

Some of these ten assumptions raise additional questions.

Why use the term "effective" rather than "quality"?

Warren Bennis, author of "Why Leaders Can't Lead" (Jossey-Bass, 1989) states:

> Quality often is not measured at all but is appreciated intuitively. Our response to quality is a feeling. Feelings of quality are concerned intimately with our experience of meaning, beauty and value in our lives (p.6).

While the intent of EC/SP is to support "Quality" programs, the term "Quality" is too nebulous to use as a basis for structuring a system. The term "effective" is more operational.

What are the implications of the concept of effectiveness (SEA to LEAs to Schools to Instructional Staff)?

This concept of effectiveness has many implications for a state system of quality or effectiveness assessment. It is the perspective of EC/SP that "Effective Special Education Programs" should exist at four levels as shown in Figure 1.

Effective Classroom Programs

At the classroom or child level, the valued results are assumed to be as follows:

Students demonstrate:

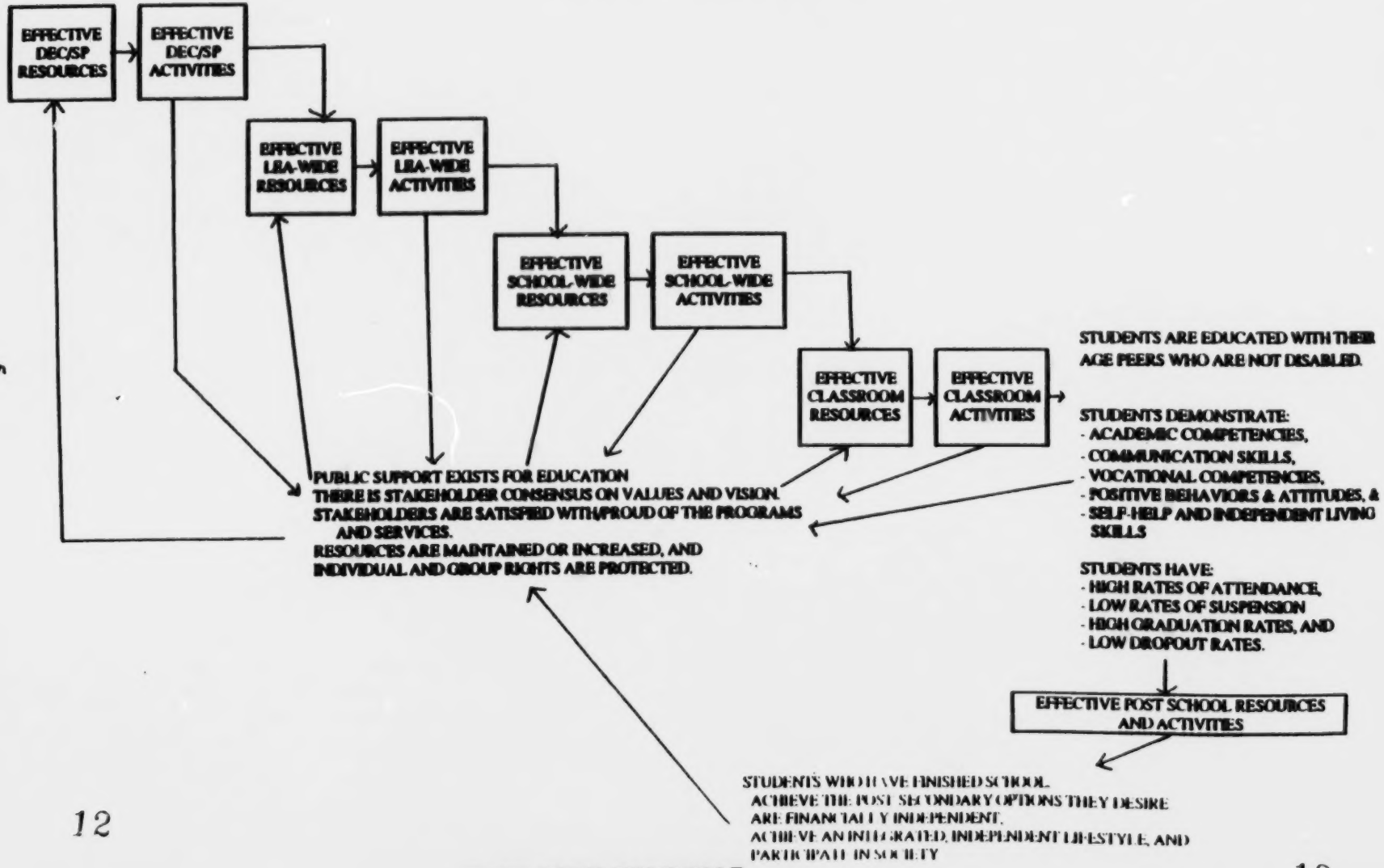
- Communication skills,
- Academic competencies,
- Vocational competencies,
- Positive behaviors and attitudes, and
- Self-help and independent living skills

Students have:

- High rates of attendance,
- Low rates of suspension,
- High graduation rates, and

FIGURE I

AN EFFECTIVE STATE SYSTEM OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR DELAWARE:
MULTIPLE LEVELS OF EFFECTS


EFFECTIVE DEC/SP RESOURCES
EFFECTIVE DEC/SP ACTIVITIES
EFFECTIVE LEA-WIDE RESOURCES
EFFECTIVE LEA-WIDE ACTIVITIES
EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-WIDE RESOURCES
EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-WIDE ACTIVITIES
EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM RESOURCES
EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES
STUDENTS ARE EDUCATED WITH THEIR AGE PEERS WHO ARE NOT DISABLED.
STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE:
- ACADEMIC COMPETENCIES,
- COMMUNICATION SKILLS,
- VOCATIONAL COMPETENCIES,
- POSITIVE BEHAVIORS & ATTITUDES, &
- SELF-HELP AND INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS
STUDENTS HAVE:
- HIGH RATES OF ATTENDANCE,
- LOW RATES OF SUSPENSION
- HIGH GRADUATION RATES, AND
- LOW DROPOUT RATES.
EFFECTIVE POST SCHOOL RESOURCES AND ACTIVITIES
STUDENTS WHO HAVE FINISHED SCHOOL
ACHIEVE THE POST SECONDARY OPTIONS THEY DESIRE
ARE FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT,
ACHIEVE AN INTEGRATED, INDEPENDENT LIFESTYLE, AND
PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY
PUBLIC SUPPORT EXISTS FOR EDUCATION
THERE IS STAKEHOLDER CONSENSUS ON VALUES AND VISION.
STAKEHOLDERS ARE SATISFIED WITH/PROUD OF THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.
RESOURCES ARE MAINTAINED OR INCREASED, AND
INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP RIGHTS ARE PROTECTED.

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- Low dropout rates.

Students who have finished school:

- Achieve the post-secondary options they desire,
- Are financially independent,
- Achieve an integrated, independent lifestyle, and
- Participate in society.

Effective teacher-child interactions are those that lead directly to those desired outcomes.

Effective School Level Programs

The classroom level must be supported by the building level to ensure the availability of resources necessary to implement effective classroom practices. These resources include such entities as a shared philosophy and conducive climate, professional reference materials and guidelines, instructional and assessment materials, qualified instructional personnel, and adequate facilities and equipment. Indirectly, the school administrator is responsible for the classroom level outcomes. Effective school level activities include such things as participatory planning, supervision/observation focused on students, and other "school effectiveness" indicators.

Effective LEA Programs

Similarly, the local education agency (LEA) is responsible for ensuring that each school has the special resources to conduct effective school-wide activities that support the teaching-learning process. Effective district-wide activities of local school administrators are those that support the instructional staff. Through two other levels of interaction, the LEA administrator is indirectly responsible for the student level outcomes that are valued. At the LEA level, effective activities include community involvement in district planning, staff development services that help induct new teachers, efficient material access/distribution systems, useful program evaluation and data management systems, etc.

Effective State Programs

Finally, the EC/SP is responsible for ensuring that resources are available at the district level to support effective district activities. The EC/SP must help create a State-wide consensus on the

importance of special programs. State guidelines and reference materials on effective practice must be available for local personnel to adapt. Local administrators of special programs must be given the knowledge and skill to execute effective programs and state materials systems must be available to serve as back-ups of the local systems. There are at least three levels of the special education system that intervene between the EC/SP and the child, but the EC/SP retains indirect responsibility for each student in Delaware who has a disability. Thus, EC/SP must assess and report each level of impact.

However, EC/SP can only directly impact the next level in the hierarchy. Therefore, it must focus its efforts on what it can directly change (i.e., the LEA level resources) and, through that mechanism, help all other levels make the necessary changes to improve effectiveness.

Together, the four levels of the educational system would lead to additional outcomes:

- Public support exists for education,
- There is stakeholder consensus on values and vision,
- Stakeholders are satisfied with/proud of the programs and services,
- Resources are maintained or increased, and
- Individual and group rights are protected.

If the EC/SP is only indirectly responsible, why start with outcomes at the student level?

The entire educational system is effective only when students learn, graduate, and are independent, etc. Starting at that point allows EC/SP to focus future data gathering activities. If the valued outcomes are being achieved, ergo, the system works. If the outcomes are not being achieved, the teaching-learning system should be examined. If those activities are not focused on valued outcomes, the classroom level resources must be examined, and so on up through the four levels. Starting with student level outcomes is the most logical and cost-efficient way for EC/SP to proceed.

Most importantly, the efforts of all four levels of the educational system can be directed and energized by a clear focus on student outcomes. This focus will allow EC/SP to become what Pascarella (1989) calls "A Purpose-Driven Organization." Modeling that focus in all of its endeavors should help focus the efforts of all persons in the State.

But won't it take many, many years to build consensus, create data systems, etc.?

It might take five to ten years to have all six parts of SEEDS fully operational, but there are a great many things EC/SP can do while the overall system is developed. EC/SP has some aspects of each component operating now. The State Board of Education mission and principles and earlier SEEDS products are good starts on consensus-building. Second, parts of many State data systems have outcome data that can help with "pulse-taking." The Mid-South RRC has contracted with Institutional Research Associates, Inc., (Dr. Robert Bigelow) to synthesize existing databases and to produce multiyear tables on outcomes. Also, DPI is conducting a study of data needs that will help refine the needs for "pulse-taking." EC/SP already funds special studies and some of these have had major impact, e.g., the LRE/facility studies. Attention also is being paid to LEA self-evaluations through State-wide training and requirements for LEA evaluations in local operational plans. The two areas that might need the most attention are EC/SP self-evaluation and data based decision systems within EC/SP, but these can be installed as the other parts begin to bear fruit.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

The first step of the EC/SP plan involves producing a "Profile" of Special Education in Delaware. The first profile is based on a limited set of outcome questions that can be answered by available data. Each evaluation question reflects an expectation, or standard. The questions are approximations of the questions that ultimately should be answered and are limited due to measures that are currently available. The tables and charts that appear in this profile will help define the ongoing data needs for EC/SP "pulse-taking." Eventually EC/SP would like to be able to answer all of the questions posed on the first profile. This profile will also help EC/SP begin the consensus building process.

At this time (January, 1991), the plans for the six components of SEEDS only define general directions. Starting in the spring of 1991, the SEEDS Steering Committee will be re-formed to guide ongoing system development. A long range plan that will lead to the full development and implementation will be developed. As appropriate, assistance will be obtained from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, including funding and technical assistance through the Mid-South Regional Resource Center, the National Center on Outcome Assessment, and other technical assistance programs.

SPECIAL EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

FIRST ANNUAL DELAWARE PROFILE

By
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Department of Public Instruction

with the assistance of
Dr. Kenneth Olsen
Mid-South Regional Resource Center

INTRODUCTION

During the past three years, the Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division (EC/SP) of the Delaware Department of Public Instruction has focused attention on the development of a Special Education Effectiveness Development System (SEEDS). With substantial technical assistance from the Mid-South Regional Resource Center, Lexington, Kentucky, and valuable contributions from an evaluation task force and steering committee, the Division has derived an Evaluation Model.

The purpose of the Model is to determine and report the extent to which educational programs and services for children with disabilities in Delaware are effective in order to assist the EC/SP in focusing its program improvement efforts and resources. Implications derived from the data provided by SEEDS will be considered when reviewing policies and procedures within the Division and the Department. It will further be used when redrafting and/or revising the State Plan under EHA-B.

The Model is based on ten assumptions, has four tiers, and considers process, resource, and outcome indicators (See SEEDS Position Paper for a detailed description of the Model). This Profile of Special Education Effectiveness is designed as a reporting mechanism to share with the Department and other stakeholder groups the outcomes of SEEDS on an annual basis. For purposes of the First

Annual Profile, the outcome indicators are expressed in terms of evaluation questions. These questions were first defined by the evaluation task force which represented the major stakeholders in the process.

Four areas were identified as being valued outcomes by the stakeholders. If special education programs are effective:

1. Children demonstrate progress in the development of academic, vocational and behavioral skills.
2. Youth are ready to enter the adult community as productive members of society.
3. Youth have a high quality of life as young adults in the community.
4. The stakeholders are generally satisfied with the programs and services provided.

The questions under each area are first year questions only and answers were approximated by using existing data. Therefore, this first profile is considered to be the first step in a longer process that will eventually be providing information sufficient to help Delaware leadership in planning for special education into the 21st Century.

The charts and tables included in the profile were prepared from a set of relational data files assembled and stored on the Delaware Education Computing Network. These data files were taken from archive records from various studies, annual surveys and assessment programs conducted by the Department of Public Instruction. Thus, the reliability of the information is conditional upon the original instrumentation and data collection procedures. Their validity relates directly to how well each data source illuminates the major profile questions. However, the accuracy of each table or figure is the responsibility of the authors of the Profile.

A group of special education staff from across the State attending the Exceptional Children's 1990 Summer Institute served as reviewers for the first draft of the Profile. Their comments are included throughout the Profile and were instrumental in helping to shape the development of the Long Range Plan for full implementation of SEEDS.

The framework for the Profile is not static. It should be viewed as a springboard for dialogue, refinement and recommendations for the

Steering Committee and other stakeholder groups to review for making revisions.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This section provides the reader with information on the numbers of students currently served by special education programs in Delaware. It summarizes student data by disability category and placement.

The summary information of regular vs. special education pupils was taken directly from the data files generated during the September, 1989, enrollment counts of Delaware public school students. It is important to remember that the September enrollment counts are summaries of actual student enrollments taken in all Delaware public school locations on the last day of September. As such, they represent a very reliable census "snapshot" of the location and program placement of Delaware students. However, the records are collected as aggregate data, not as individually identified cases. Thus, annual trends for identification of handicapping condition, program placement and exit from school throughout the year can only be estimated.

On September 30, 1989, 10.7% of the 97,808 enrolled students were identified as special education students. The largest specific category of disability was learning disabled, with 7.2% of the population. Table 1 summarizes this information.

TABLE 1

SUMMARY ENROLLMENTS - ALL STUDENTS
BY HANDICAPPING CONDITION
SEPTEMBER 30, 1989

HANDICAP CODE	SEPT. '89	
	N-COUNT	PERCENT
SPECIAL ED STUDENTS	10,470	10.7
REGULAR STUDENT	87,338	89.3
TOTAL	97,808	100.0
SPECIAL EDUCATION CATEGORY:		
Mentally Handicapped	1,338	1.4
Serious Emotional Disturbance	1,441	1.5
Learning Disabled	7,057	7.2
Phys/Sense Handicaps	497	.5
Other Handicap	137	.1
Not Handicapped	87,338	89.3
TOTAL	97,808	100.0%

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Table 2 summarizes the breakdown of special education students by handicapping condition. Of the 10,470 special education students, 67.4% are learning disabled (LD), 13.8% are seriously emotionally disturbed (SED), 12.8% are mentally handicapped (EMH, TMH, SMH), 4.7% have physical/sensory handicaps (Orthopedically Handicapped, Hard of Hearing/Deaf, Blind, Partially Sighted, Deaf/Blind) and 1.3% are Autistic.

TABLE 2

SUMMARY ENROLLMENTS - SPECIAL STUDENTS
BY HANDICAPPING CONDITION
SEPTEMBER 30, 1989

HANDICAP CODE	SEPT. '89 N-COUNT	SEPT. '89 PERCENT
SPECIAL EDUCATION - STATE CODES		
EMH	805	7.7
SED	1,441	13.8
LD	7,057	67.4
TMH	336	3.2
SMH	197	1.9
ORTHO	244	2.3
HHPD	201	1.9
BLIND	8	.1
PART SIGHT	8	.1
AUTISTIC	137	1.3
DEAF/BLIND	36	.3
TOTAL	10,470	100.0
SPECIAL EDUCATION CATEGORY		
MENTALLY HANDICAPPED	1,338	12.8
SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE	1,441	13.8
LEARNING DISABLED	7,057	67.4
PHY/SENSE HANDICAPS	497	4.7
OTHER HANDICAP	137	1.3
TOTAL	10,470	100 0

The chart examines the placement of identified special education students. The purpose is to establish a baseline to measure the State's progress toward implementation of its Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Initiative. The figures which summarize the placement of handicapped students were based upon the Annual Data Collection of Delaware Students with Handicaps done annually for the Federal government. Special emphasis was placed on the tables dealing with the implementation of LRE. The relative stability of these aggregate data depends almost entirely upon the accuracy of the special education supervisor/ director from each reporting agency. Except for standard checks for internal consistency across years for each placement category these data have not been audited.

Chart 1 shows that of the 12,210 students in special education programs during the '88-'89 school year, 8,603 or 70.4% were reported as spending 40% or more of their day in regular settings. Of the 70.4%, 29.6% were reported to be in regular classes and 40.8% in Resource Rooms.

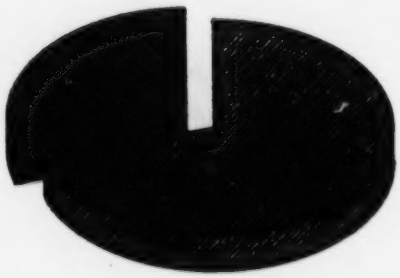
Three thousand six hundred seven, or 29.6%, spent less than 40% of their time in regular settings. Of the 29.6%, 16.8% were reported to be in separate classes, 10.6% were in public separate schools, 0.1% in private separate schools, 0.2% in public residential facilities, 0.4% in private residential facilities, 1.5% on homebound instruction, and 0.9% in correctional facilities.

CHART 1

SUMMARY TOTALS
PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH HANDICAPS
SCHOOL YEAR 1988-89

Student Spending Less Than 40 Percent of Their Time In Regular Settings (29.6%)

Separate Class (15.8%)
Public Sep. Sch. (10.6%)
Private Sep. Sch. (0.1%)
Public Resid. Fac. (0.2%)
Private Resid. Fac. (0.4%)
Homebound/Hospital (1.5%)
Correctional Facility (0.9%)



Students Spending 40 Percent Or More of Their Time In Regular Settings (70.4%)

Resource Room - 40.8%
Regular Class - 29.6%

In a recent report to the State Board of Education on its LRE Initiative the EC/SP Division noted some major progress toward the goal of developing and providing appropriate programs and services in age appropriate integrated settings, to the maximum extent appropriate. All district-, county- and state-wide programs are developing specific strategies to address this goal. New models are being developed for more challenging students such as the ILC students.

Recommendations:

The major concern expressed by the stakeholders reviewing these data at the Summer Institute related to confusion over the current Level system. Clear definitions of Levels of Service need to be established that will be consistent with Federal reporting requirements and at the same time explain the Delaware system. The EC/SP Division will need a stable, accurate information base in order to track its progress.

The following four sections of the Profile are designed to answer the questions related to achievement of valued outcomes.

Question One

Are we achieving the outcomes we value regarding student achievement/behaviors?

Question One deals with the immediate outcomes of schooling; academic, vocational, and behavioral skills. The question, phrased another way, is, "Are students with disabilities learning what we think they should?" Unfortunately, the data available at the State level are very limited regarding this question.

This section of the Profile reviews only information on special education student performance on standardized achievement tests. Their results are compared to those of regular students. During each spring since 1980, all students in grades one through eight and eleven who are enrolled in Delaware regular schools have participated in the Delaware Education Assessment Program (DEAP). In this program standardized achievement tests in the basic skills of reading, language arts, and mathematics are administered. Identified special education students enrolled in the regular school program were eligible to take the achievement battery unless exempted by their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The information in this section of the Report was taken from the total battery results for the Stanford Achievement Test (series 7) administered in the Spring of 1989 and the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS - Forms U and V) which were given in 1984 through 1988.

The essential metric used to describe the group achievement levels is the normal curve equivalent (NCE). This is a normalized, standardized scale which equates the parts and levels of the test in a score space of 0 to 99 with a national mean of 50 and a standard deviation of about 21 points. It should be noted that the NCE scale is an equal interval scale, and thus, may be used with normal curve statistics for group comparisons. Also, the NCE is equal to the national percentile points at only 0, 50 and 99; to determine percentages of students in each comparison group who score above the national average, one must go to the norms tables for each test and administration period. Finally, the NCE's for the CTBS and the Stanford were determined on separate student norm groups and, thus do not indicate equal performance on the two tests. In other words, a student who received an NCE of 60 on the CTBS would not necessarily receive the same score on the Stanford 7.

Four sub-questions were developed to attempt to answer the over-all question for this section. Each question and a description of the

available data used to try to answer the question is presented. This is followed by a brief discussion of whether the existing data are able to answer the proposed question and recommendations on how to improve this section of the Profile.

Question 1A: Did students who took DEAP tests have NCE scores comparable to students without disabilities in their grade in the area of total score?

Chart 2 and Table 3 summarize the results of the Total battery NCE for the Stanford Achievement Tests given in the spring of 1989. Comparisons are made between regular students (none) and those special education students classified as learning disabled (LD), seriously emotionally disturbed (SED) and mentally handicapped.(MH)

CHART 2

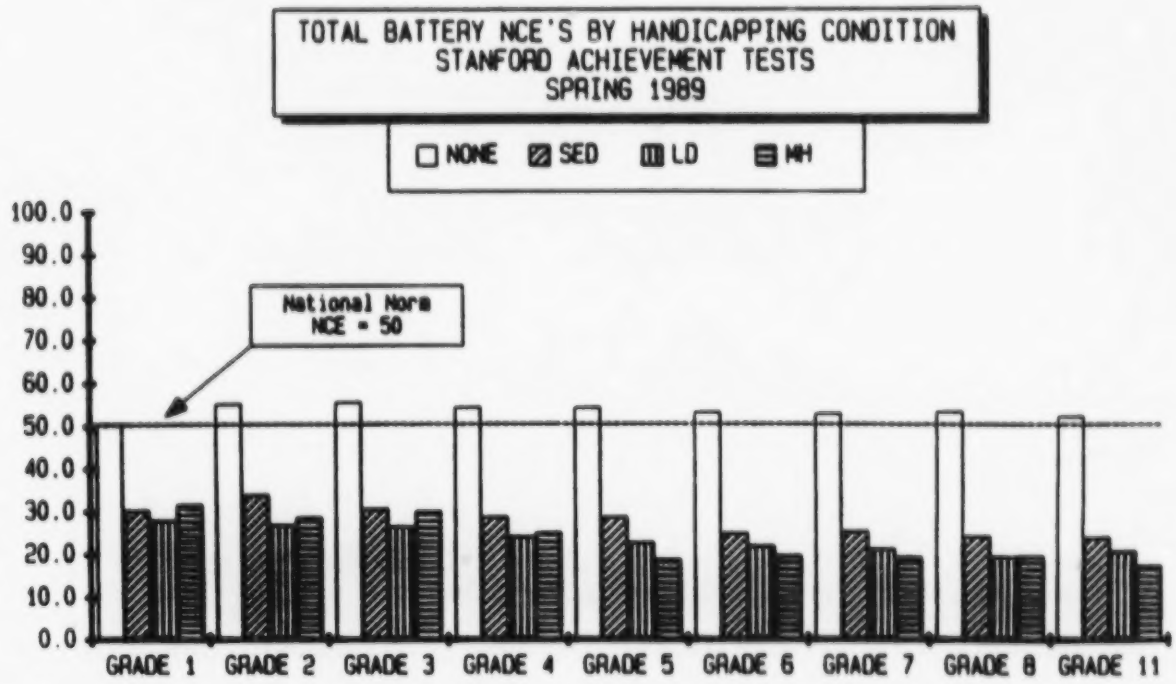


TABLE 3

TOTAL BATTERY NCE'S
STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS
(SPRING 1989)

	---HANDICAPPING CONDITION---				
	NONE	MH	SED	LD	OTHER
GRADE ONE					
N-Count	7,569	127	21	195	3
Mean	50.6	31.7	30.3	28.0	42.1
St. Dev.	21.0	17.9	17.3	15.3	14.5
GRADE TWO					
N-Count	6,847	106	45	312	2
Mean	55.2	28.6	33.9	26.8	39.9
St. Dev.	19.3	18.5	17.9	15.6	10.7
GRADE THREE					
N-Count	6,257	108	51	373	6
Mean	55.6	30.0	30.5	26.4	35.9
St. Dev.	18.9	16.2	18.1	14.7	17.5
GRADE FOUR					
N-Count	6,294	116	64	406	6
Mean	54.4	25.0	28.7	24.1	29.3
St. Dev.	18.7	15.1	15.2	12.5	9.1
GRADE FIVE					
N-Count	5,852	101	60	408	3
Mean	54.3	18.6	28.6	22.6	36.9
St. Dev.	19.6	15.4	17.7	13.9	39.1
GRADE SIX					
N-Count	5,689	91	70	382	4
Mean	53.2	19.6	24.8	21.8	22.0
St. Dev.	19.0	17.0	15.4	13.7	11.1
GRADE SEVEN					
N-Count	5,522	70	74	370	5
Mean	52.9	19.2	25.3	21.1	26.5
St. Dev.	18.8	15.0	13.7	13.6	22.7
GRADE EIGHT					
N-Count	5,403	72	61	339	5
Mean	53.4	19.5	24.2	19.4	27.4
St. Dev.	19.0	18.8	13.9	11.4	15.3
GRADE ELEVEN					
N-Count	4,755	55	39	154	3
Mean	52.3	17.2	23.9	20.7	26.3
St. Dev.	19.1	11.0	10.7	9.6	10.5

Table 4 provides a similar breakdown by grade and covers the years from 1984 through 1988 when the CTBS was given. It was not possible to report by handicapping condition as that information was not kept prior to 1986.

TABLE 4

TOTAL BATTERY NCE'S
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
GRADE TWO					
REGULAR					
N-Count	5,257	5,642	5,890	6,524	6,891
Mean	64.4	65.7	64.9	66.7	65.9
St. Dev.	19.1	19.0	17.5	16.8	19.5
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	629	660	617	605	540
Mean	33.3	31.3	35.9	40.4	37.8
St. Dev.	18.2	18.2	18.8	17.0	19.0
GRADE THREE					
REGULAR					
N-Count	5,247	5,233	5,584	5,895	6,544
Mean	63.0	64.0	66.5	68.6	64.8
St. Dev.	17.6	17.6	15.6	16.0	18.1
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	688	676	672	633	613
Mean	29.4	31.1	36.9	41.9	35.6
St. Dev.	17.1	17.2	17.6	16.5	17.6
GRADE FOUR					
REGULAR					
N-Count	5,003	5,379	5,316	5,668.	5,961
Mean	62.8	63.3	61.0	62.6	64.9
St. Dev.	18.1	18.3	16.8	16.6	18.3
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	627	683	668	601	608
Mean	29.4	28.5	31.0	35.7	34.6
St. Dev.	15.4	15.8	14.4	13.2	17.3
GRADE FIVE					
REGULAR					
N-Count	5,328	5,211	5,484	5,414	5,849
Mean	58.0	59.7	59.2	60.1	60.7
St. Dev.	16.6	17.1	16.5	15.9	16.9
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	673	639	674	615	592
Mean	27.1	28.7	30.6	33.3	32.4
St. Dev.	13.7	13.5	12.5	11.5	14.7
GRADE SIX					
REGULAR					
N-Count	5,620	5,445	5,400	5,375	5,548
Mean	61.4	63.7	62.0	64.0	63.4
St. Dev.	18.7	18.5	18.3	18.8	18.9
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	734	626	636	600	552
Mean	26.7	30.4	33.1	32.5	31.3
St. Dev.	15.6	16.6	14.8	14.3	15.1
GRADE SEVEN					
REGULAR					
N-Count	6,528	6,011	5,801	5,461	5,781
Mean	58.3	59.8	57.7	59.8	62.0
St. Dev.	17.8	17.8	14.7	15.0	17.7
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	794	769	650	612	583
Mean	26.6	27.9	33.2	34.6	31.8
St. Dev.	13.9	13.6	12.2	12.7	13.5

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(Cont'd)
TOTAL BATTERY NCE'S
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988
GRADE EIGHT					
REGULAR					
N-Count	6,449	6,315	5,830	5,435	5,558
Mean	58.5	61.9	57.4	59.9	62.8
St. Dev.	18.4	18.8	15.9	16.2	18.3
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	674	746	704	616	513
Mean	24.0	27.3	28.9	34.1	32.4
St. Dev.	14.9	15.0	13.6	13.8	14.9
GRADE ELEVEN					
REGULAR					
N-Count	5,191	5,158	5,114	5,232	5,295
Mean	57.1	59.6	58.2	59.4	60.4
St. Dev.	20.2	20.1	18.2	17.6	19.4
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	352	353	359	260	255
Mean	16.6	18.5	19.3	22.0	23.0
St. Dev.	13.3	13.9	13.9	15.9	14.9

As would be expected, special education students averaged well below regular student performance. This is not surprising since many special education students were tested on their regular grade level for achievement, rather than their instructional level. The discrepancies increase as the students get older for several reasons. First, students who are able to obtain skills at grade level are returned to regular education. The remaining students are those with the most needs. Note that the numbers tested go down each year. Also, a review of the proportions of students tested each year indicates that many students with disabilities are not exempted from taking inappropriate sections of the tests; sections they are unable to complete on a basic level.

Question 1B: Did students who took the third grade DEAP tests for the first time as an identified student with disabilities in 1980 sustain or increase their NCE scores throughout their school experience in the area of total score?

The data to answer this question were developed in two different ways. In Chart 3 and Table 5 the population of third grade special education students were identified in 1984 and their total battery scores tracked through Grade 7 even if they were later returned to regular education. A comparison group of regular students was also used. The means across the five years remain relatively stable for both groups and the distance between the two groups is also stable.

CHART 3

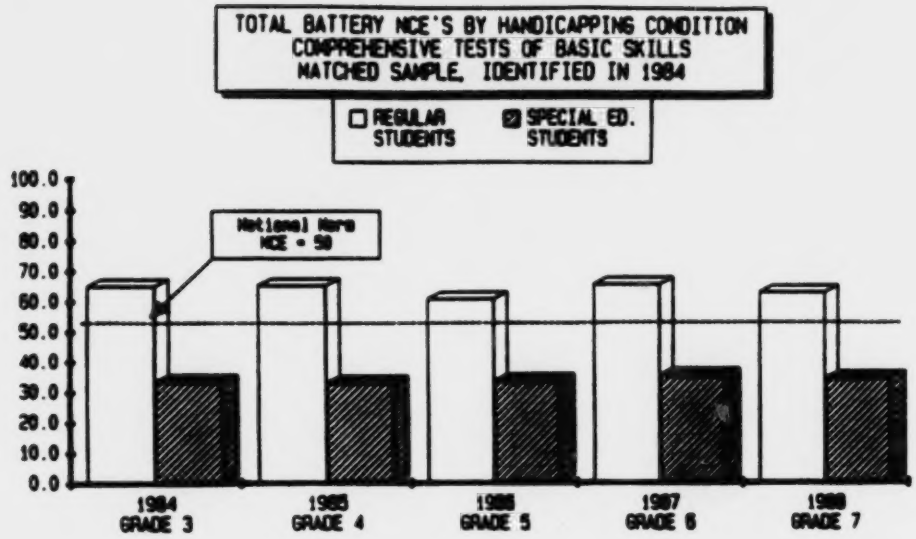

TABLE 5

TOTAL BATTERY NCE'S
LONGITUDINAL MATCHED SAMPLE, IDENTIFIED IN 1984
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

	Grade 3 1984	Grade 4 1985	Grade 5 1986	Grade 6 1987	Grade 7 1988
REGULAR					
N-Count	3,459	3,459	3,459	3,459	3,459
Mean	65.1	65.4	60.9	65.7	63.0
St. Dev.	17.1	17.6	16.2	18.4	17.6
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Count	317	317	317	317	317
Mean	33.6	33.3	33.9	35.6	34.5
St. Dev.	15.7	16.1	12.5	15.0	13.8

Note: Identification of students by special education category was not initiated until 1986.

The second sample was a group of special education students identified in Grade 7 (1988) and broken out by handicapping condition (See Chart 4 and Table 6). This group was then tracked backward to Grade 3 (1984). Again a comparison group of regular students was used. The advantage to this second method was that data could be shared by handicapping condition. However, the means again remain relatively stable across the five years and the difference between regular and special education students is also stable. However, the number of students for which such longitudinal data are available is extremely low. Therefore, these data should be interpreted with caution.

CHART 4

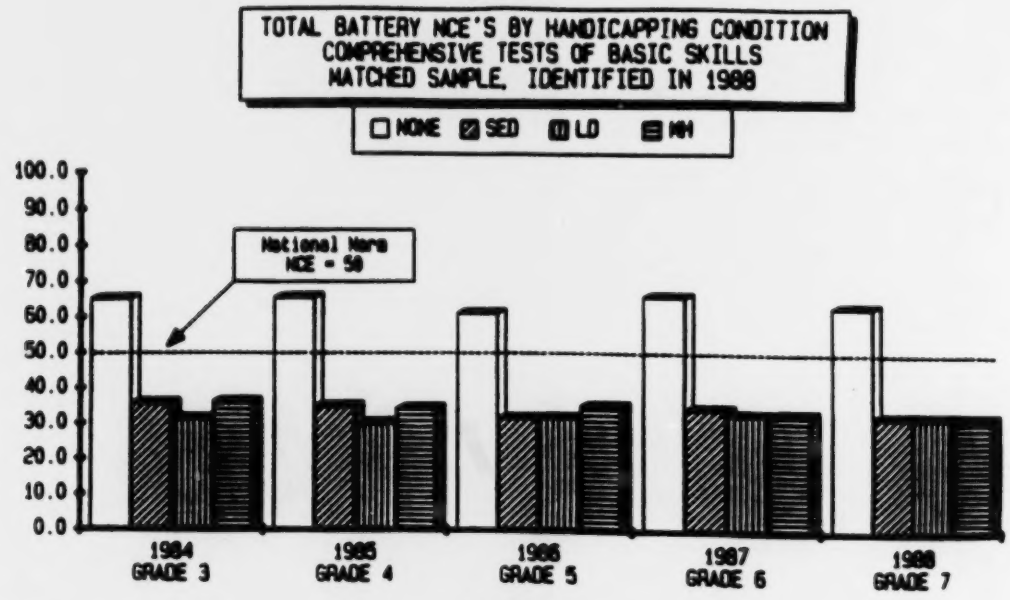

TABLE 6

TOTAL BATTERY NCE'S
LONGITUDINAL MATCHED SAMPLE, IDENTIFIED IN 1988
COMPREHENSIVE TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

	Grade 3 1984	Grade 4 1985	Grade 5 1986	Grade 6 1987	Grade 7 1988
REGULAR					
N-Count	3,488	3,488	3,488	3,488	3,488
Mean	65.0	65.3	60.9	65.7	62.9
St. Dev.	17.2	17.6	16.1	18.3	17.5
MH					
N-Count	24	24	24	24	24
Mean	36.2	34.2	35.0	33.0	32.2
St. Dev.	22.6	22.0	19.7	19.0	20.6
SED					
N-Count	44	44	44	44	44
Mean	35.7	34.9	31.6	34.3	32.4
St. Dev.	17.9	16.8	13.4	15.6	13.7
LD					
N-Count	218	218	218	218	218
Mean	31.3	30.2	31.7	32.8	32.3
St. Dev.	14.7	14.9	11.4	13.2	12.2

Consistently low performance in both the cohort groups and the matched samples of students tested over a five year period on the CTBS indicates that, as would be expected, Delaware students with disabilities do not perform as well as students without disabilities on nationally standardized, norm referenced achievement tests of basic skills.

Question 1C: Were other students with disabilities appropriately excused from taking the DEAP tests?

Table 7 presents a summary of the numbers of students potentially eligible to take the DEAP tests since 1985 and the number of students who actually took the tests. This is broken out by regular and special education categories. The number tested refers to the actual number of students who took the test. The number eligible is based on the September 30 counts. The numbers for special education were derived from a total of all LD, SED, and MH students in regular school programs at the time of the September 30 counts. Based on these data the percentage of special education students taking the test compares favorably to the percentage of regular education students taking the test, and it might be assumed that students with disabilities were not categorically excluded from testing. However, students in special schools/programs are not "eligible" to take the tests.

TABLE 7

SUMMARY N-COUNTS
N-TESTED VS. N-ELIGIBLE
STATE ACHIEVEMENT TESTING PROGRAM

		CTBS			-- SAT --
	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
REGULAR					
N-Tested	52,431	53,518	54,680	57,352	58,748
N-Eligible*	54,086	55,640	57,707	59,561	61,121
%-Tested	97.0%	96.2%	94.8%	96.3%	96.1%
SPECIAL EDUCATION					
N-Tested	6,243	6,154	6,001	5,661	6,146
N-Eligible*	6,431	6,489	6,337	6,054	5,925
%-Tested	97.1%	94.8%	94.7%	93.5%	103.7%
TOTAL					
N-Tested	58,674	59,672	60,681	63,013	64,894
N-Eligible	60,517	62,129	64,044	65,615	67,046
%-Tested	96.9%	96.0%	94.7%	96.0%	96.8%

*Eligibility figures are from the September 30 Unit Count for regular schools (LD, SED, MH).

Are we answering the question?

The general consensus is that the available data create more questions than they answer. The results reported in this section have generated the most discussion and represent the biggest challenge to the full development of SEEDS. These data beg the questions: What is special education for? What are the student

achievement and behavior outcomes we value in Delaware? Are they the same for all students? Are there major curricular objectives and valued outcomes that are not assessed such as vocational skills?

Several reviewers also commented on the difficulty in comparing regular and special education students and that the focus should be on comparing progress of identified students over time. Others question the value of including special education students in the DEAP program at all or of using that information as a measure of academic progress. Reviewers indicated there is confusion over the standards for including and excluding students from the DEAP program. There is currently inconsistency in how that is determined at the district level.

Recommendations:

1. This is an important question and we need to look for ways to adequately answer it. An essential first step is definition of an appropriate and comprehensive range of valued achievements.
2. Standards need to be clarified at the State level for including and excluding students from DEAP and then consistently used across districts.
3. Additional ways need to be found to measure student achievement and behaviors besides DEAP. Identifying appropriate bench-marks to measure progress toward outcome goals is an issue for all of education and one that should be addressed for special education students as part of the development of SEEDS. Curriculum based and performance based assessment must be considered.
4. Measures need to be developed that allow for specific disabilities and levels of severity of disability, and that account for the individualized nature of special education.
5. Measures need to be determined for early childhood programs as we move toward full implementation of the programs for 3 to 5 year old children with disabilities.

Question Two

Are we achieving the outcomes we value regarding transition from school?

This section of the Profile looks at information about students when they leave the school system and move into the adult community. The expectation is that effective schooling for students with disabilities will result in successful transition to post-school environments.

Information about special education school leavers was taken from the Delaware Transition Project's Exit Information data. This was the second year these data were collected from districts and the first year that drop-out information was requested. Fifteen of the seventeen comprehensive districts reported data so the overall numbers are low compared to the other data sources. Information on all school leavers was taken from the Report of Educational Statistics and the Annual Drop-Out Study, assembled by offices of the Department of Public Instruction. Even though the results of these studies were aggregated from individual student records, it was not possible to match and validate them across computer files. Therefore, each source represents a potentially different sample for similar reported categories (e.g., proportions of students with disabilities dropping out). Other important differences between data sources include:

1. Grade representation - grades 9-12 for the Transition study, grade 12 only for the Educational Statistics report of High School Seniors.

2. Methods for reporting dropouts - student records are not matched across districts or programs to detect redundant counts or re-entry into other school programs.

Until these studies can be based on tracked student records, the proportions should be viewed with all the cautions used with uncontrolled, "naturally occurring" samples.

Three sub-questions were developed to attempt to answer the overall question for this section. Each question and a description of the available data used to try to answer the question are presented. This is followed by a brief discussion of whether the existing data are able to answer the proposed question, and recommendations on how to improve this section of the profile.

Question 2A: Is a high percentage of students with disabilities leaving school with High School Diplomas or Certificates of Performance?

Based on the 1989 data, 246 or 46.6% of the special education school leavers left school with a High School Diploma. An additional 69 or 13.1% received a Certificate of Performance, and 22 or 4.2% reached age 21, the final year for school eligibility under Delaware law. One hundred ninety-one students from grades 9-12 or 36.6% dropped out of school during the '88-'89 school year.

In comparison, 6,104 or 93.6% of the regular high school seniors graduated with a high school diploma. An additional 82 or 1.3% received Certificates of Performance. Three hundred thirty-two or 5.1% of the twelfth graders dropped out during the '89-'90 school year.

The numbers of students earning diplomas, certificates or aging out for special education students are significantly lower than those for regular education students. However, they are consistent with national data on special education school leavers as indicated through the preliminary reports of the National Longitudinal Study currently being conducted by SRI International (Wagner, 1989). Chart 5 and Table 8 summarize this information.

CHART 5

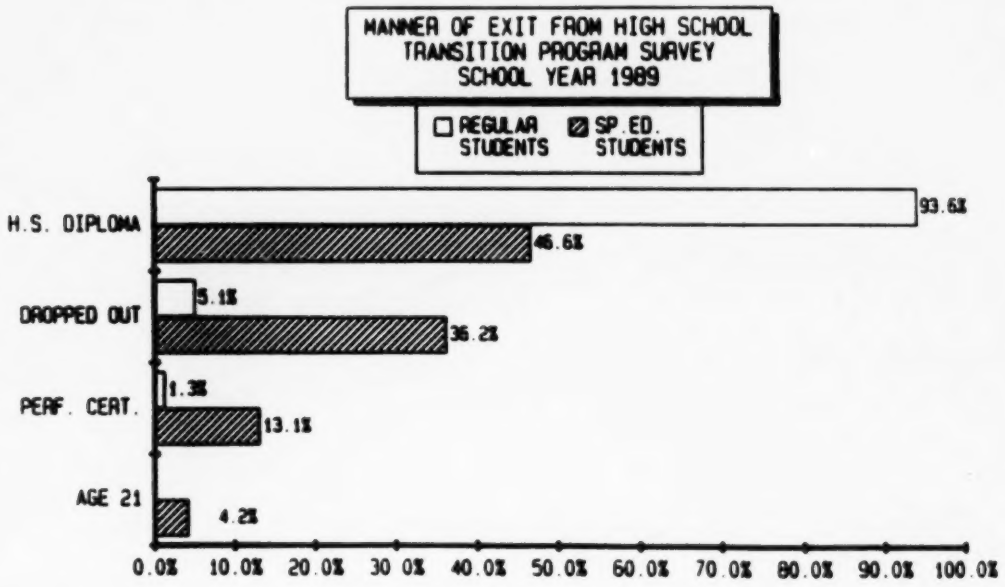

TABLE 8

MANNER OF EXIT FROM HIGH SCHOOL
DELAWARE HIGH SCHOOL SURVEYS
SCHOOL YEAR 1989

SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS (Transition Program Survey) (School Leavers Grades 9-12)	N-COUNT	PERCENT
High School Diploma	246	46.6%
Dropped Out	191	36.2%
Certificate of Performance	69	13.1%
Reached Age 21	22	4.2%
SAMPLE-N*	528	100.0%

REGULAR STUDENTS (Grade 12 Only)	N-COUNT	PERCENT
High School Diploma	6,104	93.6%
Dropped Out	332	5.1%
Certificate of Performance	82	1.3%
Reached Age 21	N/A	N/A
SAMPLE-N**	6,518	100.0%

* From Special Education Transition Study, 1988-89
** From Report of Educational Statistics, 1988-89

Question 2B: Is a high percentage of students with disabilities dropping out in 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th grade?

Table 9 and Chart 6 indicate that special education students are dropping out throughout the high school years. The highest numbers drop out in 9th and 10th grades. Students classified as SED are the most likely to drop out (16.7%), with LD students being the second largest group (11.6%). Regular education students average 6.8% over the year from all four grades.

CHART 6

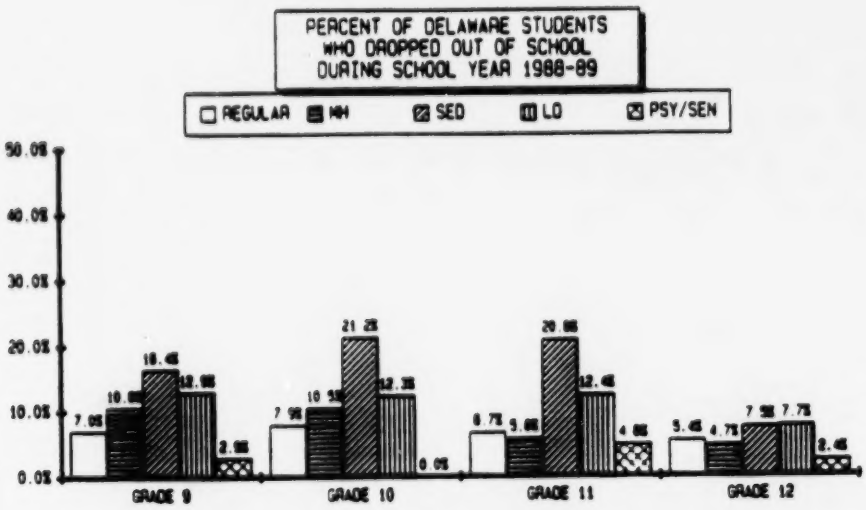

TABLE 9

DROPOUT SUMMARY
GRADE BY HANDICAPPING CONDITION
SCHOOL YEAR 1988-1989

GRADE	NONE	MH	SED	LD	PHY/SEN	OTHER	TOTAL
GRADE 9							
N-Enrolled	6,704	104	225	575	35	8	7,651
N-Drop	474	11	37	74	1	0	597
Pct. Drop	7.0%	10.6%	16.4%	12.9%	2.9%	---	7.8%
GRADE 10							
N-Enrolled	6,262	95	189	489	25	2	7,062
N-Drop	497	10	40	60	0	0	607
Pct. Drop	7.9%	10.5%	21.2%	12.3%	---	---	8.6%
GRADE 11							
N-Enrolled	5,691	103	101	347	21	9	6,272
N-Drop	383	6	21	43	1	0	454
Pct. Drop	6.7%	5.8%	20.8%	12.4%	4.8%	---	7.2%
GRADE 12							
N-Enrolled	6,148	127	133	337	42	20	6,807
N-Drop	332	6	10	26	1	1	376
Pct. Drop	5.4%	4.7%	7.5%	7.7%	2.4%	5.0%	5.5%
TOTAL (Grades 9 - 12)							
N-Enrolled	24,805	429	648	1,748	123	39	27,792
N-Drop	1,686	33	108	203	3	1	2,034
Pct. Drop	6.8%	7.7%	16.7%	11.6%	2.4%	2.6%	7.3%

Question 2C: Are the reasons for dropping out the same for students with and without disabilities?

Table 10 summarizes the reasons for dropping out as reported by students at the time they leave school. The most frequent reason given is poor attendance for both regular and special education students. In reviewing the breakdown by grade this remains the major reason throughout high school. The second major reason for both groups is desire to work. For special education students, this represents 18.7% in 9th grade, 23.6% in 10th grade, 32.4% in 11th grade and 20.5% in 12th grade. Academic difficulties is the third major reason for special education students with an overall percentage of 9.8%. However, for seniors it is tied with desire to work at 20.5%. These same reasons hold for regular education students.

TABLE 10

DROPOUT SUMMARY
TYPE OF STUDENT AND REASON
SCHOOL YEAR 1988-1989

GRADES 9 THROUGH 12

REASON	REGULAR		SPECIAL		TOTAL	
	Count	Pct.	Count	Pct.	Count	Pct.
SCHOOL REASON						
Academic Difficulties	186	11.0%	34	9.8%	220	10.8%
Discipline Problems	81	4.8%	17	4.9%	98	4.8%
Poor Attendance	1,001	59.4%	206	59.2%	1,207	59.3%
No Response	418	24.8%	91	26.1%	509	25.0%
TOTAL	1,686	100.0%	348	100.0%	2,034	100.0%
PERSONAL REASON						
Illness	5	.3%	2	.6%	7	.3%
Pregnancy	46	2.7%	8	2.3%	54	2.7%
Married	13	.8%	1	.3%	14	.7%
Care for a Child	49	2.9%	7	2.0%	56	2.8%
Other	57	3.4%	16	4.6%	73	3.6%
No Response	1,516	89.9%	314	90.2%	1,830	90.0%
TOTAL	1,686	100.0%	348	100.0%	2,034	100.0%
ECONOMIC REASON						
Desire to Work	327	19.4%	81	23.3%	408	20.1%
Financial Responsibilities	18	1.1%	2	.6%	20	1.0%
Needed at Home	10	.6%	3	.9%	13	.6%
Other	15	.9%	11	3.2%	26	1.3%
No Response	1,316	78.1%	251	72.1%	1,567	77.0%
TOTAL	1,686	100.0%	348	100.0%	2,034	100.0%

Are we answering the question?

People who have reviewed this section of the Profile basically agree that the data answer the question. The answers to the question indicate that for a significant percentage of special education school leavers, the outcomes are not the valued ones; i.e., approximately 36% of identified students are not graduating with a high school diploma or a Certificate of Performance. This information is already providing the impetus for program changes at the secondary level for special education students.

Recommendations:

1. Continue to refine the tracking system data to improve consistency across districts, especially as related to the drop-out data.
2. Clarify and standardize High School Diploma vs. Certificates of Performance requirements for special education students across districts.

3. Collect information on referrals to adult service agencies at time of exit from school.
4. Conduct an in-depth study of the special education drop-out issue.
5. Begin to use these data for decision making within EC/SP.

Question Three

Are we achieving the outcomes we value regarding quality of post school life?

This section reviews information on the status of special education students after they have left school. To some extent the educational system in Delaware must have longer range impact on the quality of life its students experience. If our students obtain skills as an immediate outcome of their education (Question #1) and if they have a successful transition from school (Question #2), it might be assumed that they are more likely to have a high quality of life in post school environments. That is, they will continue their education, be gainfully employed, use leisure time well, participate in their communities, and live independently.

Data from this section of the Profile come from the "Survey of High School Graduates." Each year the Department of Public Instruction collects information about the secondary program and post-graduate plans of Delaware High School Seniors. During the following school year, high school counselors contact these same students to determine their current employment, income, continuing education and general placement in the world of work. The return rate for this study varies dramatically between high schools and the years the data were collected. Also, students with disabilities included in the sample are usually those who have completed a regular high school program. The 1986-87 survey was the most recent study which had a reasonable proportion of graduates in handicapped categories represented across many districts..

Three sub-questions were developed to attempt to answer the overall question for this section. Each question and a description of the available data used to try to answer the question are presented. This is followed by a brief discussion of whether the existing data are able to answer the proposed question and recommendations on how to improve this section of the Profile.

Question 3A: Are the employment rates of former students with disabilities comparable to the rates for former students without disabilities one year after leaving school?

In the 1986-87 follow-up survey, 119 former special education students responded to the question about work. Out of that number, 68 or 57.1% were employed full time. In addition, 12 or 10.1% were employed part time and four were in the military full time. Twenty-one or 17.6% were seeking employment and 14 reported they were not employed and were not seeking employment. This compares to 58% of regular students who were employed full or part time. Chart 7 and Table 11 summarize employment status.

CHART 7

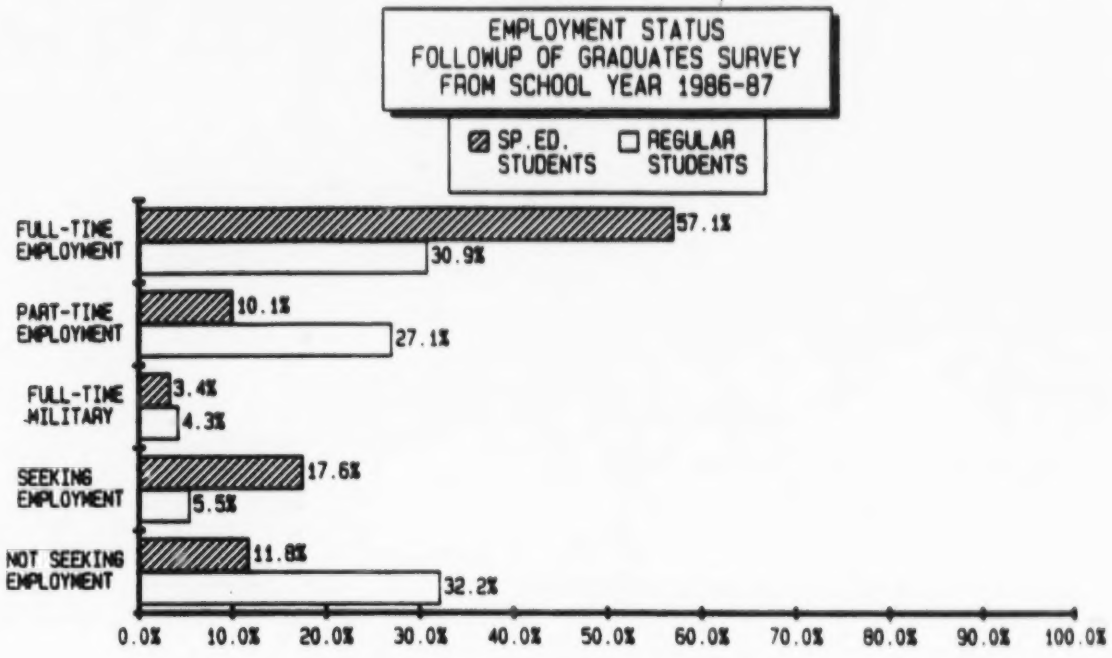

TABLE 11

EMPLOYMENT SUMMARY
FOLLOWUP OF GRADUATES
FROM SCHOOL YEAR 1986-87

	REGULAR		SPECIAL		TOTAL	
Employment Status	Cnt	Pct	Cnt	Pct	Cnt	Pct
Full-time Employed	809	30.9%	68	57.1%	877	32.1%
Part-Time Employed	708	27.1%	12	10.1%	720	26.3%
Full-Time Military	112	4.3%	4	3.4%	116	4.2%
Seeking Employment	144	5.5%	21	17.6%	165	6.0%
Not Seeking Employment	841	32.2%	14	11.8%	855	31.3%
Total	2,614	100.0%	119	100.0%	2,733	100.0%

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Question 3B: Are the hourly wages of former students with and without disabilities comparable one year after leaving school?

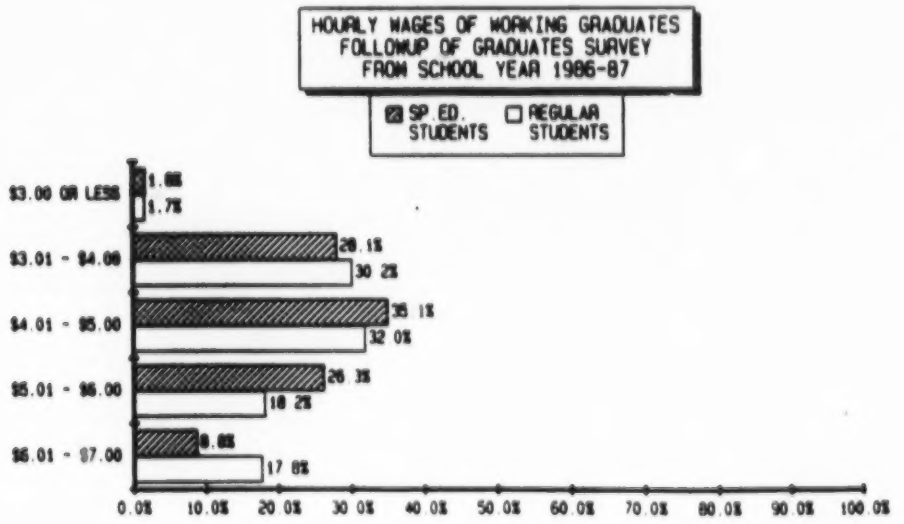
Fifty-seven former special education students answered this question. Of that group, 16 or 28.1% were earning between $3.01 and $4.00 per hour compared to 347 or 30.2% of the regular respondents. Twenty or 35.1% were earning between $4.01 and $5.00 per hour compared to 368 or 32% of the regular respondents. Fifteen or 26.3% were earning between $5.01 and $6.00 per hour compared to 209 or 18.2% of the regular respondents. Finally, only 5 or 8.8% were earning between $6.01 and $7.00 per hour compared to 205 or 17.8% of the regular respondents. Table 12 and Chart 8 summarize the wage information.

TABLE 12

WAGES OF WORKING GRADUATES
FOLLOWUP OF GRADUATES
FROM SCHOOL YEAR 1986-87

	REGULAR		SPECIAL		TOTAL	
HOURLY WAGES	Cnt	Pct	Cnt	Pct	Cnt	Pct
$3.00 or less	20	1.7%	1	1.8%	21	1.7%
$3.01 - $4.00	347	30.2%	16	28.1%	363	30.1%
$4.01 - $5.00	368	32.0%	20	35.1%	388	32.2%
$5.01 - $6.00	209	18.2%	15	26.3%	224	18.6%
$6.01 - $7.00	205	17.8%	5	8.8%	210	17.4%
TOTAL	1,149	100.0%	57	100.0%	1,206	100.0%

CHART 8



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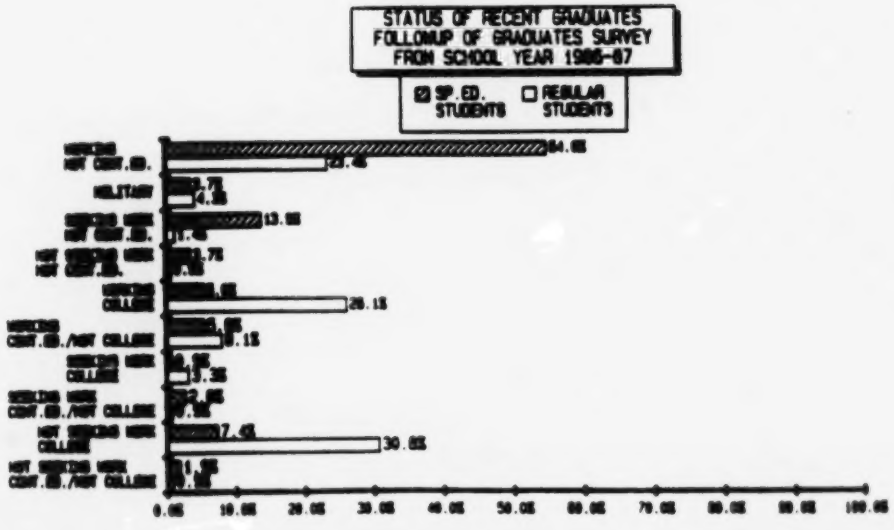
Question 3C: Are the rates of students involved in continuing their education comparable between students with and without disabilities one year after leaving school?

Chart 9 and Table 13 provide a summary of the current status of former members of the class of '87. Of the 108 former special education students, 12 or 11.2% are working and attending college or another form of continuing education; 4 or 3.7% are seeking work while attending college or another form of continuing education; and 10 or 9.3% do not plan to work, but are attending college or another form of continuing education. In summary, a total of 26 or 24.2% are involved in some form of post secondary education. For regular education students, 1,804 or 70.1% are continuing some form of post secondary education.

TABLE 13

CURRENT STATUS	REGULAR		SPECIAL	
	Cnt	Pct	Cnt	Pct
WORKING, NOT COUNT. ED	602	23.4%	59	54.6%
MILITARY	112	4.3%	4	3.7%
SEEKING WORK, NOT CONT. ED	37	1.4%	15	13.9%
NOT SEEKING WORK, NOT CONT. ED	23	.9%	4	3.7%
WORKING AND COLLEGE	672	26.1%	6	5.6%
WORKING AND CONT. ED. OTHER THAN COLL	210	8.1%	6	5.6%
SEEKING WORK AND COLLEGE	84	3.3%	1	.9%
SEEKING WORK & CONT.ED OTHER THAN COLL	22	.9%	3	2.8%
NOT SEEKING WORK & COLLEGE	793	30.8%	8	7.4%
NOT SEEKING WORK & CONT. ED. OTHER THAN COL	23	.9%	2	1.9%
TOTAL	2,578	100.0%	108	100.0%

CHART 9



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Are we answering the question?

The numbers are too low to generalize the findings. It would appear that special education students are more apt to be employed or seeking employment and less likely to be involved in any type of post secondary education. Wages are low for both groups although as the wages go up the percentage of former special education students decreases. Again, these findings are consistent with those of the national longitudinal study of special education school leavers (SRI, 1989).

The reviewers also cautioned against any comparisons based on such a low number. However, they did indicate that this was needed outcome information and that we should find ways to improve the response rates. They also would have liked more demographic breakdowns including classification and levels of service. Another question should also explore the linkages to the adult service agencies and service providers for people with disabilities. Several comments also indicated the need to move ahead with examining the need for program changes based on these outcomes, i.e., our special education graduates are not being very successful in their first year out of school.

Recommendations:

1. Review the questions to make sure we are asking the most relevant ones. For example, do we expect schools to affect other areas, i.e., do we need questions about leisure time, living environments, comunity participation, etc.?
2. Improve the data collection - we need a higher response rate to ensure valid results.
3. Collect follow-up data on special education drop outs (as part of the in-depth study mentioned in the previous question).
4. Explore the potential of other data sources for follow-up information such as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Division of Mental Retardation.
5. Begin to use these data for decision making within EC/SP.

Question Four

Are the Stakeholders generally satisfied with special education services for children with disabilities?

There were no available data sources to answer the questions related to satisfaction of the stakeholders. However, the reviewers have made comments related to these questions and feel that these types of questions do need to be addressed as SEEDS is developed. The proposed questions are listed along with comments from the reviewers and recommendations for implementation of this component of the Profile.

Question 4A: Do parents and other members of families with a child who has a disability perceive that their involvement with exceptional children's programs in schools or in their home:

a. increased their awareness of the child's needs and abilities and the implications of the disability?
b. increased their acceptance and ability to cope and/or reduced potential stress?
c. increased their ability to work with/instruct the child?
d. increased their ability to obtain needed information and services?

Question 4B: Are levels of satisfaction with schooling and/or perceptions of quality comparable for parents of students with and without disabilities in the areas of:

a. academic achievement?
b. social-behavioral development?
c. survival and independent living skills?
d. vocational skills?
e. preparation for post secondary education?

Question 4C: Are the levels of satisfaction with schooling and/or perceptions of quality comparable for former students with and without disabilities two years after leaving school?

Question 4D: Do students without disabilities in Delaware schools perceive students with identified disabilities as students and peers before perceiving them as persons with disabilities?

DRAFT

LONG RANGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SPECIAL EDUCATION EFFECTIVENESS DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

by
Dr. Martha Brooks
with the assistance of
the staff of the EC/SP Division
and
Dr. Kenneth Olsen, Mid-South Regional Resource Center

January, 1991

The purpose of the Special Education Effectiveness Development System (SEEDS) is to determine and report the extent to which educational programs and services for children with disabilities in Delaware are effective. This information will be used to help the Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division (EC/SP) of the Delaware Department of Public Instruction (DPI) focus its program improvement efforts and resources. During the past three years the development of SEEDS has been a major focus area of the Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division and has led to the development of three products.

The first is a Position Paper which outlines the conceptual and philosophical basis for SEEDS and defines the six components of the system. The second is the first Annual Profile of Special Education in Delaware. This first profile was based on a limited set of outcome questions that could be answered by available data. The experience of developing the first profile has generated more questions than it answered. However, it has provided enough information to clarify what needs to be done in order to fully operationalize SEEDS. This has led to the development of the third product - a long term plan that will lead to the full implementation of SEEDS. The plan addresses each of the six components of SEEDS and lists the proposed activities under each.

Component One: Consensus Building on Effectiveness

For the entire system to work there must be a consensus on a vision of effectiveness, especially the outcomes that are valued by the people of Delaware. This vision will build off of the recently

developed State Board goals and will be reinforced through law, policy and procedures throughout the system. The major issues impacting on special education as well as the research base which underlies it will continue to evolve over time. The "vision" will be a changing one and the strategies developed to build consensus on effectiveness will by necessity be a permanent part of the system.

The initial feedback indicates that the four major outcome areas (student achievement/behaviors, transition from school, quality of post school life, and stakeholder satisfaction) developed through the initial process are appropriate. (For more detail please refer to the First Annual Profile Report.) However, as the First Profile is circulated to a broader audience more feedback will be available to continue the refinement of the questions. In addition new questions will be generated as issues change. To ensure the complete development of Component One, it will be necessary to establish an ongoing feedback loop which will enable SEEDS to be responsive to the various stakeholder groups. Stakeholders have been defined as parents, students, teachers, administrators, SEA staff, employers, elected officials, other agency staff, and the community at large.

The following activities are proposed to assure the full implementation of Component One.

1.1 Collect feedback from all of the stakeholder groups on the First (and subsequent) Profile(s).

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

1.2 Establish and maintain an Advisory Group to SEEDS. This group will meet at least twice a year to review proposals and products. It will be representative of the various Stakeholder groups.

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

1.3 Establish written guidelines that define effectiveness.

1991-1992
1992-1993

Question 4E: Are the levels of satisfaction with schools, and/or perceptions of quality comparable for special education and non-special education staff regarding:

a. special education services and programs?
b. regular education services and programs?

Question 4F: Do regular education kindergarten teachers and first grade teachers perceive that early childhood intervention makes a positive difference in the students who enter their classes?

Question 4G: Are the levels of satisfaction and/or perceptions of quality expressed by local school board members regarding special services and programs comparable to those expressed by local school board members about general education?

Question 4H: Are the levels of satisfaction with schooling and/or perceptions of quality expressed by employers regarding the preparation of students for employment comparable for students with and without disabilities?

Question 4I: Are the levels of satisfaction with schools and/or perceptions of quality of preparation expressed by faculty of post secondary education programs comparable for former students with and without disabilities?

Question 4J: Are parents, educators and the public in consensus about the outcomes they value for exceptional children's educational programs and services including:

a. student achievement/behaviors?
b. transition from school?
c. quality of post school life?
d. stakeholder perceptions?

The reviewers indicated that all of these questions had value, but added several cautions. The size of samples should be large enough to assure a cross section of all of the demographic variables such as levels of service and classifications. Several people expressed doubt about the value of comparing perceptions of parents of regular students with those of parents of special education students although they like the question (4B). A great deal of work will be required to develop surveys that will adequately collect the needed data and it was suggested that one or two areas be addressed each year possibly as in depth studies.

Recommendations:

1. Several of the post school outcome questions (4C, 4H, 4I) should be addressed through the federal Follow-Along Tracking System grant.
2. The question related to consensus on valued outcomes (4J) should be a priority for the next year as it will validate the work of the Advisory Committee and also establish a baseline against which future comparisons can be made.
3. The question related to early childhood interventions (4F) should be a priority for the next year to establish a baseline as we move toward full implementation of services for 3 to 5 year old children.
4. The question related to the perception of regular students of their peers with disabilities (4D) should be incorporated into DPI's LRE Implementation Plan. Again, it will provide a baseline against which to measure changing perceptions of children with disabilities.

1.4 Further define effectiveness at the classroom level in terms of expected outcomes, activities and resources.

1991-1992
1992-1993

1.5 Develop and maintain a public relations plan that will provide a mechanism to share reports, products/drafts, and studies generated through SEEDS, and to generate public awareness and consensus.

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

Component Two: Development and Maintenance of the "Pulse-Taking" System

The development of permanent sources of data and a data management system to maintain this data base are essential to the full implementation of SEEDS. It is this system that will provide the basic information for all four of the outcome areas.

The development of an ongoing data base is well underway in several areas. The challenge for the full implementation of SEEDS will be to establish long term access to needed data bases and to ensure that as new data are added to the systems they will be consistent. The Follow Along Tracking System and the Early Childhood (0-8) Tracking System are both in the developmental stages. Ensuring that they are set up to collect the types of information needed to answer the questions will be important. The data management plan currently being developed by the Department will also be an important linkage.

The following activities are proposed to ensure the full implementation of Component Two.

2.1 Establish and maintain a technical group within the Department that will manage the development and refinement of data bases. For purposes of SEEDS this group will ensure that the data bases will:

a: Answer the questions
b: Communicate

The following is a list of essential items:

a. Standard identifying data elements across data sources.

b. Consistent data collection procedures.
c. Standard data dictionaries for data elements.
d. Policies for accessing the data which are consistent with the Department.

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

2.2 Continue the development of the Follow Along Tracking System. Work to incorporate it into the Statewide data management system for education in Delaware. In the future development of this system, special attention should be paid to ensuring the inclusion of all the questions related to transition, quality of post school life and several of the stakeholder satisfaction questions.

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

2.3 Continue the development of the Early Childhood Tracking System (ISIS).

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

2.4 Review and revise standards and procedures for the inclusion and exclusion of special education students in the State testing program (DEAP). Make sure that all districts understand these policies and are consistent in their use. Revise the documentation/monitoring process regarding justification of exclusions.

1990-1991
1991-1992

2.5 Develop a system-wide data collection plan that will consolidate data collection to the greatest extent possible. The computerization of this system should be a primary goal.

1991-1992

2.6 Establish a committee to determine ways other than DEAP to measure student achievement and behaviors in a manner that will provide state-wide data.

1991-1992

Component Three: Process for Data-Based Decision Making.

This component is designed to take the information generated by SEEDS and use it to guide the activities of the Exceptional Children/ Special Programs Division. In the past the primary focus has been on making sure districts were in compliance with PL 94-142. SEEDS will allow a closer look at the effectiveness of special education programs. It will also provide data over several years to measure the effectiveness of the Division itself.

The following activities are proposed to ensure the full implementation of Component Three.

3.1 Define the mission of EC/SP as one of ensuring effective education for all students with disabilities, not merely education that is in compliance. Ensure that this mission is reflected in the State Board Goals and Objectives, Department Goals and Objectives, and in the reorganization efforts currently underway in the Department.

1990-1991

3.2 Develop a plan to integrate staff functions and projects to focus on achieving the effectiveness indicators at the classroom, the school, the district and the State level through activities such as:

a. Policy and procedure development, revision and dissemination.
b. Statewide training and technical assistance.
c. Model program and service development and funding.
d. Public awareness efforts.
e. Working with Institutions of Higher Education to focus personnel preparation in Delaware on the effectiveness indicators.

f. Working with other agencies responsible for persons with disabilities to facilitate cooperation on effective education for children in all settings.
g. Maintenance of the Comprehensive Compliance Monitoring System (CCMS) and SEEDS

1990-1991
1991-1992

3.3 Develop formal policies and procedures for data based decision-making within EC/SP. This would include such activities as:

a. Use of the Annual Profile Data as the basis for an Annual Plan for the Division.
b. Require SEA staff to justify all plans and proposals with data and, when none exists, to conduct a formal or informal study upon which to base the decision.

1990-1991
1991-1992

3.4 Incorporate data-based decision procedures and SEEDS development and maintenance roles into EC/SP staff job descriptions and annual performance evaluations, adjusting roles and obtaining staff as necessary to ensure attention to the effectiveness mission.

1990-1991
1991-1992

Component Four: Conduct In-Depth Studies of Special ues:

This component provides the av to develop data sources for those questions for which existing do not exist. It will also be the basis for data-based decision-m g for those areas that are not currently addressed in the existing data base. The Division has conducted several such studies in the recent past, such as the Intensive Learning Center study. The reviewers during the Summer Institute strongly recommended that the stakeholder satisfaction questions be the priority for the first few years, as there is no existing data source to answer these questions. A second identified priority was a study of student assessment commonalities across the

State. As formats are developed to address these questions they can be built into the overall data management system (e.g., see 2.2).

The following activities are proposed to ensure the full implementation of Component Four.

4.1 Develop policies and procedures for funding studies that will help clarify needs for EC/SP actions. These should include:
- a. development of RFPs.
- b. obtaining bids and conducting reviews.
- c. monitoring contractors.
- d. reporting results.
- e. conducting action planning.

1990-1991
1991-1992

4.2 Develop a study that addresses Question 4.F: Do regular education kindergarten teachers and first grade teachers perceive that early childhood intervention makes a positive difference in the students who enter their classes? Ideally, this same study will address the achievement/behavior outcomes for this age population.

1991-1992

4.3 Develop a study that addresses Question 4.J: Are parents, educators and the public in consensus about the outcomes they value for exceptional children's educational programs and services including:
- a. student achievement/behaviors?
- b. transition from school?
- c. quality of post school life?
- d. stakeholder perceptions?

1990-1991

4.4 Develop a study that addreses Question 4.D: Do students without disabilities in Delaware schools perceive students with identified disabilities as students and peers before perceiving them as persons with disabilities?

1991-1992

4.5 Develop a study that addresses those stakeholder questions related to parent perceptions (Questions 4.A, and 4.B).

1992-1993

4.6 Develop a study that addresses other stakeholder perceptions (Questions 4.G, 4.H, and 4.I).

1992-1993

Component Five: Conduct Exceptional Children/Special Programs Self-Evaluations

This component will develop the mechanisms through which SEEDS will measure the effectiveness of the EC/SP Division in meeting its goals. It relates directly to Component Three, the process for data based decision making, and will provide linkage to all the other activities of the EC/SP Division.

The following activities are proposed to ensure the full implementation of Component Five.

5.1 Establish effectiveness indicators for all EC/SP activities. This will be correlated with activity 3.2 which integrates staff functions and projects to focus on achieving the effectiveness indicators at all four levels.

1990-1991
1991-1992

5.2 Develop internal policies, procedures and formats for using EC/SP staff, other DPI staff, parents, other agency staff, LEA staff and others as data sources to judge EC/SP impact and effectiveness.

1990-1991
1991-1992

Component Six: Encourage and Support LEA Self Evaluation

The final component is designed to ensure that special education staff in all the districts in the State will develop skill in evaluating

program effectiveness. This is a required component of the Local Operational Plan (LOP). EC/SP staff will be responsible for providing training for district staff, access to district data from the state tracking files as needed, coordination between district staff who are working on similar projects, and a forum for sharing evaluation design and outcomes.

The following activities are proposed to ensure the full implementation of Component Six.

6.1 Clarify the program evaluation requirements in the Local Operational Plan (LOP).

1990-1991

6.2 Develop and provide training to districts on program evaluation. This training will be targeted at small teams from each district who will actually be doing program evaluation.

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

6.3 Provide technical assistance to districts as needed. Areas already identified as needing help include:

a. computer usage
b. accessing of tracking system information
c. statistical support

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

6.4 Provide a Clearing House for Program Evaluation information within the State. This will include:

a. plans
b. data collection forms, surveys, etc.
c. reports

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

6.5 Provide regular forums for sharing of program evaluation information. This will include opportunities such as: State supervisor meetings, the Summer Institute, topical conferences, professional association and/or advocacy groups, conferences, workshops and meetings.

1990-1991
1991-1992
1992-1993

Based on the feedback received for all stakeholder groups, this plan will be modified. In addition, specific resources (staff and funding) will be identified for each activity. Please take a moment to complete the attached comment sheet and return it to:

Dr. Martha Brooks, State Supervisor
Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 1402
Dover, DE 19903

COMMENT SHEET

Please share your comments with us.

1. Are the underlying assumptions appropriate? (Are there others that might be useful, ones that could be deleted or ones that need further clarification?)

2. Are the valued outcomes ones that you share? (Student achievement/behaviors, transition from school, quality of post school life, stakeholder satisfaction) Are there ones you do not feel are priorities, or are there others that should be included?

3. Are the six components of SEEDS appropriate to meet Delaware's needs? Does the long range plan adequately address them? (This plan is still in draft form and before we assign resources and finalize it we need feedback related to the suggested strategies and their prioritization.)

Other Comments:

Mail to: Dr. Martha Brooks, State Supervisor
Exceptional Children/Special Programs Division
Department of Public Instruction
P O. Box 1402
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